CHICAGO HEIGHTS TERMINAL TRANSFER R. R. CO.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT.

G. M. WEST,
SUPERINTENDENT.

CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILL., Feby 25th, 1903

Mr W. H. Hatton,

Senate Chamber, Madison, Wis.

My dear Will:-

Your letter of the 23rd is at hand. I had given you up as a hopeless case on a business proposition. If I could have seen you I could have given you a better insight in to the project than by correspondence, but will herewith place before you as much of the subject as I have in hand myself.

In December last parties came to me, sent by some St Paul officials, to obtain expert estimates, and statement, relative to the cost, and possibilities, of a road north and south through West Flroida. I found they were endeavoring to exploit a land grant charter, which I enclose herewith, and in which ex senator Mann, of Florida, who is the fatherin law of Gov Jennings, held the largest, if not all interest. He was to have a one quarterinterest in all lands secured in the building of the road. Another party there who had been interested in it was to have an eighth. The Chicago promoters were to have a quarter, leaving a sixteenth which they promised me for myaid, and another sixteenth was going to a man who would raise the money, and the balance to be given to the parties who would advance the money, taking as security all the lands, road &c. They have been hard at work at the project. It seems that Mann haspaid out quite a sum on it, and there is a matter of 12.000 which he wants paid him for the charter, and for some reason the Chicago promoters do not raise this sum. Nor do I think that they will still they state they will, and that then they can easily raise the money to build the road. I was to have the full management of it; location &c. Also my sixteenth interest in all profits, bonuses &c that could be raised. I have worked hard on it and lean

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have worked hard on it; learned much about the laws of that state as to railway building &c., and do not like to give it up. However I have felt from the beginning that we were giving the Florida parties too much, and that they should be willing to give up the charter for an eighth, and no money consideration. I fear the Chicago promoters will fail in getting the money. They have til March 2nd now to get the 12.000. And I feel that a charter can be had from the April Legislature which would be as good as this which would not cost us anything compartively speaking, and on which we could go ahead. I am that sanguine of the situation and profitableness of the project, that I am convinced with a start of 50.000 or 75.000 I could start the road; and build it through from the bay to the L. & N., or to Dothan, Alabama, where it would connect with the Georgia central a,d the northwest line to Birmingham, or Montgomery. That connection would make of it a direct line to the Gulf from the north east, and the north west. And the business of the Naval Stores Co, and the lumbermen, is now that far advanced in to West Florida, toward the Gulf, that there is a pying business there, which would increase right along.

The big lumber companies I think would take an interest in the matter. The German American, at Millville, four miles east of us; the mill two miles east of us; the Gulf Naval Store with 15 turpentine camps along the line; the Yockey Lumber Co., of Hazelhurst, Wis., whom I have not as yet interviewed; the Brewers, of Saginaw; the Sothern Lumber Co., of which G. Curtis, of Madison, is Secy; and B. P. Jones, of Valdosta, Ga., with others whom I have not located, are all interested in such a project, and I feel would give it good financial aid. There is work there now for a road, and there are several projected through there, but as yet

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none have begun operations, other than to make surveys, and I am trying to head them off through correspondence. If you are acquainted with the Yocky people I wish you would interview them and see what they they would do. I know I could build a standardline through that country for 7.000 per mile; and a lighter rail for less. If we could get eight thousand acres of land per mile; selected from any vacent lands in the state, we could get land that would sell for two dollars per acre, and that alone would more than put us a grand profit, and leave us the road also. The laws of Florida I am told, though now prohibiting any more land grants to roads, will admit of eight thousand acres being given to any road complying with their requirements, which are all right.

Just then the Chicago parties called me up and wish me to come in and see them, as our Mr Hammond, who is a lawyer, been a state senator in Florida, and is close to Mann, is just in from Jacksonville, and they wish tosee me. I dont know what they now have but they do not move fast enough to suit me, or seem to grasp the situation. There are at least three otherlines headed that way. The first started takes the prize. There is no mistake about that. My plan was to have a north and south line from Dothan to Apalachicola; the latter a place of 4.000 inhabitants and offereing ten car loads of high grade freight each day from one firm. Then I would touch at St Joseph, as it would be right on the line, and secure what there might eventually be in that harbor. Then a branch along by the mills on the bay, from Saint Andrews to a connection north eas of the bay, with this main line. However at first the branch, and the line north to the L. & N., about 50 miles, would be the first portion built. I would place the line after leaving Millville, the location of the

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German American Co., that distance from the bay that we would get all the pine and naval stores which now has to be hauled a long distance to the water, and that far away that we could secure all such business. There is now a weekly steamer line on between Saint Andrews and Pensacola, and another going on at once between Mobile and Saint Andrews. Then there are two old lines running on the Apalachicola which business a road would take from the water ways, as they always have done.

I enclose a letter received from Jones, of Valdosta, whom I heard was going to build a line in that section, and whom I wished to check until I could get matters in shape to have him take an interst with me. I am told that he is the heaviest backer of the Gulf Naval Stores Co., and other projects of that kind there. In addition to this project there is with the opening of a road to Saint Andrews, and the increased business of the Naval Store Co., and the mills, a good opening there for a small bank, and I proposed that as soon as the business was started I would organize such an institution there. There is nothing of the kind within 60 miles, and all business has to be done at Pensacola. There are other business chances which I am exploiting with parties who will go in to them as soon asthe road is started. Such as a hotel project; refrigerating and ice plant; &c. There is no place in the Nited States that offers such an opportunity of profitable railway building as that section between the L. & N. and the Gulf, and the Choctowhatchee and Apalachicola river. And the time is ripe to make amove there, and if I cannot get in now some one else will take it from me. Thus my anxiety. I will be glad to hear from you as to your views on this matter, and would be pleased to talk it over with you if you think it worhh your time. Please return all enclosures soon aspossible as I wish to use them. Sincerely yours